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## Edinburgh Exchanges 1: Field/Work in the Archive

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# Edinburgh Exchanges 1

*The City as Archive Field/work in the Archive*



**25–30 June**

**Installation 1:** City Chambers arcade.

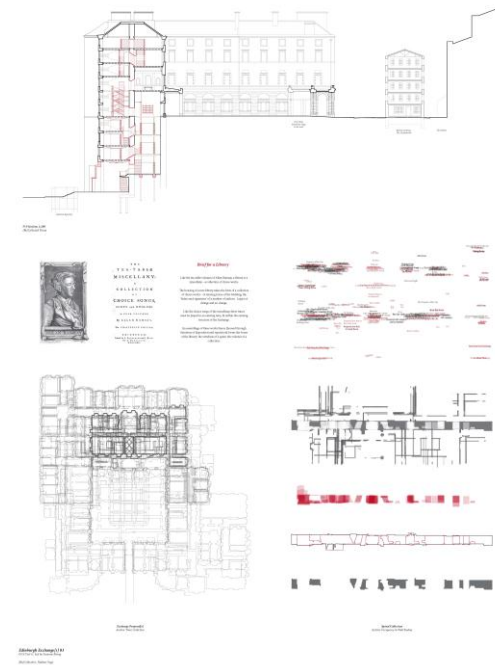
**Installation 2:** g\_a\_p gallery, 20 Chambers Street.

**Mon 25 June**

**Symposium** Edinburgh Exchanges 1

3-6pm. The Urban Room, CEC, Market Street, Edinburgh.

Hosted by Suzanne Ewing & MA Architecture DO2 Unit 4.



Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture MA students have researched and speculated alterations to Edinburgh's original **Royal Exchange building, High Street** (William Adam, 1754). This work, and other 2012 ESALA design research work - *The Closes Project* (MA ACCE) and *PhD by Design* (Chris French) - provides an anchor for case presentations and reflective discussion with City of Edinburgh historic urban and building experts on:

## **The City as Archive (for proposals)**

*Invited participants:* Historic Scotland Scottish Ten Project, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS), RCAHMS, ESALA Architectural designers and historians.

## **Field/work in the Archive (for design)**

*Invited participants:* City of Edinburgh Council, The Cockburn Association, Edinburgh Architectural Association, Royal Institute of Architects in Scotland, ESALA Architectural designers and historians.



1 Nathan Ozga [Re]Collection, May 2012.  
2 Ricky Cheung, Fore-stair, May 2012

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# The City as Archive - Field/work in the Archive

In Architecture and Urban Design practice and education, the city is often described as a Laboratory- a place where ideas, experiments and methods can be posited, tested and evaluated. This conceptualisation of the city assumes a quasi scientific framework which sets out prescriptive modes of subsequent operation- problem solving, quantitative evaluation, design 'results'. It positions the city as a problem, a site of intervention, a passive object of application of methods, an inert condition in need of knowledge derived from presupposed theory. Similarly inhibiting is a description and conception of the City as a Work of Art. By contrast, the project, '**Field/work in the Archive**', is founded in architecture as a discipline necessarily situated in relations between theory and practice. It assumes that knowledge is sited materially as built form, indexed through visual and textual documents, evidenced in marks and traces of use, and it is both formed and discovered in working through the collection that is itself alert, responsive to attention. In this project, the city is engaged with productively not solely through modes of hypothesis and experiment, or aesthetic judgement, but through close investigation, critical practices, speculation and techniques of material and spatial thinking which are drawn from the humanities and design disciplines, with emphasis on learning from what exists, potentially leading to informed and grounded invention of working with what might exist in the future.

The Project builds directly from the research-led architectural design studio based production of *city|speculations*, and in particular *SaltCity:Cádiz Field+Work 2006-08* (Ewing, 2008) and *Irrigations: Marseille 2009-11* (Ewing, 2012). In this work, the city has been conceived as an archive to be worked with in distinctive and productive ways. '**Field/work in the Archive**' transposes research outcomes, innovative pedagogical structuring, working methods and particular processes of research-led studios focused on other European cities, to the city of Edinburgh. Learning from a city, building and site is a continuous thread in the history of architectural education. However, while many other disciplines- anthropology, ethnography, archaeology- have traditions of participant-observation and fieldwork, *learning from* culture, environment, material situation, in Architecture, field/work and site/work are distinctive sets of practices and techniques of *working with* what exists- the material, spatial, temporal, cultural, political – in order to project and speculate on new possible futures. This has been previously achieved through the return of selected design and research material to the study city in the form of exhibition, workshop, and publication (eg. *SaltCity* exhibition and international workshop participation, Cádiz 2009; reviews with ENSA, Marseille, 2010).

**Field/work in the Archive: Edinburgh Exchanges 1** is a pilot project that builds from a core strand of research work (*Architecture and Field/Work*, Ewing et. al, Routledge, 2011) and ongoing exploration of the potential of inventive public exhibition and installation in furthering, enriching and connecting research, teaching and design (*Cádiz City Model*, 2008, *Inside-Out city*, 2010, *Marseille City models*: 2011).

**Edinburgh Exchanges 1** focuses on current studio design research work (DO2 'Exchanges') led by Suzanne Ewing, concerned with the city as an archive, and the archive as a site of field/work. The aim is to return design and research work to the site - in this case the City Archive at Edinburgh's first Enlightenment civic building, the 1754 Royal Exchange, now Edinburgh's City Chambers. This will be achieved through installation of selected work in the public courtyard, loggia accessed from the High Street. Selected work from 'The Closes Study'- the MAACCE Investigative project 2011, led by Ella Chmielewska and John Lowrey, and the PhD Design work of the ex-Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters (Chris French) is included here and in the satellite space of the g\_a\_p gallery in Chambers Street.

**Field/work in the Archive: Edinburgh Exchanges 1** makes this work publicly accessible, for a short period of 'field exhibition' from 25-30 June 2012 and interactions with the work will be documented. An *exchange* is set up between the archive, the city building and working with the archive of the selected buildings and urban conditions intrinsic to Edinburgh. A workshop/ opening event will be held in the City of Edinburgh Council's Urban Room, Market Street, on 25 June 2012 with invited contributors from organisations such as CEC Design Initiative, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Historic Scotland/ the Scottish Ten Project, RCAHMS, in order to develop connections and explore future collaborative projects with city, national and international based institutions. This project is funded by an Edinburgh College of Art Knowledge Exchange Grant.

## Edinburgh Exchanges 1

